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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 VATICAN 000059

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR EUR/WE MENNUTI AND NEA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [IS](#) [IZ](#) [IS](#) [IZ](#) [IS](#) [IZ](#) [VT](#) [VTPREL](#) [VTPREL](#)

SUBJECT: POPE LAUNCHES END OF YEAR PEACE OFFENSIVE

REF: A. 02 VATICAN 5461

[B](#). 02 VATICAN 5162

[C](#). 02 VATICAN 4388

SUMMARY

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 VATICA 00059 01 OF 03 081341Z

[1](#). (U) THE POPE AND SENIOR VATICAN OFFICIALS HAVE LAUNCHED AN END OF YEAR "PEACE OFFENSIVE" WITH A SERIES OF STATEMENTS AND MESSAGES AIMED AT COUNTERING THE PERCEPTION THAT WAR IN IRAQ IS INEVITABLE. THESE MESSAGES HAVE ALSO URGED THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO PURSUE ALL POSSIBLE STEPS TO AVOID WAR. IN HIS NEW YEAR'S HOMILY, THE POPE EMPHASIZED THAT "PEACE IS POSSIBLE AND A DUTY," WHILE AT CHRISTMAS, HE CALLED ON ALL BELIEVERS TO "EXTINGUISH THE OMINOUS SMOLDERING OF A CONFLICT WHICH, WITH THE JOINT EFFORTS OF ALL, CAN BE AVOIDED." ALTHOUGH THE HOLY SEE'S POSITION HAS NOT CHANGED SUBSTANTIVELY FROM ITS PREVIOUS POSITION (REFTELS) THAT WAR COULD BE JUSTIFIED IF THE UN DETERMINES MILITARY ACTION NECESSARY AND ALL OTHER MEANS OF AVOIDING CONFLICT ARE EXHAUSTED, RECENT STATEMENTS HAVE HAD GREATER URGENCY AND A SHARPER TONE, SUGGESTING THAT THE HOLY SEE WOULD LIKELY CONDEMN ANY ACTION THAT OCCURRED WITHOUT UN AUTHORIZATION OR WITHOUT ALLOWING THE INSPECTION PROCESS TO RUN ITS COURSE. THE HOLY SEE CONTINUES TO REJECT THE NOTION OF A PRE-EMPTIVE WAR, ASSERTING THAT IT WOULD LEAD TO "THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE" WITH EVERY COUNTRY BEING EMPOWERED TO TAKE UNILATERAL ACTION TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS WITH NEIGHBORS OR ENEMIES. THE POPE HAS ALSO REPEATEDLY SPOKEN OUT ABOUT THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT, WITH BALANCED CALLS FOR AN END TO THE SPIRAL OF BLIND VIOLENCE AND SUFFERING OF ALL THE PEOPLES IN THE REGION. END SUMMARY.

SEIZING THE 'BULLY PULPIT' FOR PEACE

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 VATICA 00059 01 OF 03 081341Z

[2](#). (U) TAKING FULL ADVANTAGE OF THE 'BULLY PULPIT' AFFORDED THE POPE BY THE MANY HOLIDAY SEASON MASSES AND MESSAGES HEARD BY MILLIONS WORLDWIDE, HE AND SENIOR VATICAN OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY PUSHING A 'MESSAGE OF PEACE' TO COUNTER ACCEPTANCE OF THE INEVITABILITY OF WAR IN IRAQ AND OF CONTINUED VIOLENCE IN ISRAEL AND PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES. ACCORDING TO ARCHBISHOP RENATO MARTINO, NEWLY APPOINTED HEAD OF THE COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, THE POPE IS "GENUINELY VERY CONCERNED BY THE EVENTS THAT COULD TAKE PLACE IN THE NEAR FUTURE." ACCORDING TO MARTINO, THE POPE IS DOING "EVERYTHING IN HIS POWER TO AVOID A DETERIORATION IN THE SITUATION THAT COULD END IN CONFLICT." BEGINNING WITH HIS CHRISTMAS DAY "URBI ET ORBI" ADDRESS, TELEVISED IN OVER 50 COUNTRIES, THE POPE APPEALED TO THE WORLD "NOT TO YIELD TO MISTRUST, SUSPICION, AND DISCOURAGEMENT, EVEN AS THE TRAGIC REALITY OF TERRORISM FEEDS UNCERTAINTIES AND FEARS." HE FURTHER CALLED ON BELIEVERS AND MEN OF GOODWILL TO "EXTINGUISH THE OMINOUS SMOLDERING OF A CONFLICT WHICH, WITH THE JOINT EFFORTS OF ALL CAN BE AVOIDED."

[3](#). (U) AT THE NEW YEAR'S MASS, THE POPE CALLED FOR PEACEFUL MEANS TO OVERCOME INTERNATIONAL TENSIONS, STATING THAT "BEFORE THE CONFLICTS OF THE DAY AND THE THREATENING TENSIONS OF THE MOMENT, ONCE AGAIN I INVITE ALL TO PRAY SO THAT PEACEFUL MEANS OF AGREEMENT WILL BE SOUGHT...IN HARMONY WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW." HE EMPHASIZED THAT "DESPITE SERIOUS AND REPEATED ATTACKS AGAINST THE SERENE AND SHARED COEXISTENCE OF PEOPLES, PEACE IS POSSIBLE AND A DUTY... AND MUST BE CONSTRUCTED WITH EVERY EFFORT." AFTERWARD, GREETING TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE, INCLUDING PEACE MARCHERS FORM THE
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 VATICA 00059 01 OF 03 081341Z
SANT'EGIDIO COMMUNITY THROUGHOUT ITALY, THE POPE RECEIVED EXTENDED APPLAUSE WHEN HE DECLARED: "HOW CAN ONE NOT EXPRESS ONCE AGAIN THE HOPE THAT AMONG THOSE WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE, EVERYTHING POSSIBLE WILL BE DONE TO FIND PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS TO THE MANY TENSIONS PRESENT IN THE WORLD, PARTICULARLY IN

THE MIDDLE EAST, AVOIDING FURTHER SUFFERINGS TO THOSE PEOPLES WHO HAVE BEEN SO TRIED."

COUNTERING INEVITABILITY OF WAR

14. (SBU) IN A PRE-CHRISTMAS TOUR D'HORIZON INTERVIEW IN ROME'S LA REPUBBLICA NEWSPAPER, FOREIGN MINISTER JEAN-LOUIS TAURAN LAUNCHED THE HOLIDAY PEACE BLITZ WITH THE THEME THAT "THE USE OF ARMS IS NOT AN INEVITABLE FATALITY, AND WHAT IS MORE, NO PROVISION IS MADE IN THE UN CHARTER FOR A PREVENTIVE WAR." TAURAN WENT ON TO UNDERSCORE BAGHDAD'S RESPONSIBILITY TO "APPLY POLICIES IN ACCORD WITH STANDARDS OF CONDUCT THAT GO WITH BEING A MEMBER OF THE UNITED NATIONS." NOTING THAT

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED PTQ8600

PAGE 01 VATICA 00059 02 OF 03 081342Z
ACTION EUR-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AMAD-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	USNW-00	DODE-00
	DS-00	UTED-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01
	VCE-00	NEA-00	DCP-01	NSAE-00	DHS-00	IRM-00	TEST-00
	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	NFAT-00	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/004W

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P 081319Z JAN 03
FM AMEMBASSY VATICAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
ISLAMIC CONFERENCE COLLECTIVE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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HE HAD CONVEYED TO THE U.S. TWO MONTHS EARLIER (REFTELS) THE HOLY SEE'S VIEW OF THE NEED FOR DIALOGUE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY IN THE FACE OF IRAQI DEFAULT, HE INSISTED THAT "NOTHING SHOULD BE DECIDED WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS."

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 VATICA 00059 02 OF 03 081342Z

15. (SBU) TAURAN WAS SHARPLY CRITICAL OF POTENTIAL UNILATERAL U.S. ACTION, INSISTING THAT "IT CANNOT BE THAT A MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CAN DECIDE: 'I WILL DO THIS AND YOU WILL HELP ME, OTHERWISE, STAY AT HOME.'" IF THIS WERE TO HAPPEN, TAURAN CAUTIONED, "THE WHOLE SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL RULES WOULD CRUMBLE, AND ONE WOULD RISK THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE." INEVITABLY, IN HIS VIEW, INDIVIDUAL STATES HAVING DISPUTES WITH OTHER STATES WOULD, USING THE SAME LOGIC, DECIDE THAT THEY WOULD "PUT THINGS IN ORDER" UNILATERALLY. JUSTICE AND PEACE'S MARTINO ALSO CAUTIONED AGAINST UNILATERALISM RECENTLY, OBSERVING THAT "WE SHOULD REJECT UNILATERALISM, AS WELL AS THE IDEA OF A WORLD POLICEMAN." BOTH MARTINO AND FM TAURAN HAVE SPOKEN OF THE VALUE OF A "MODERATING" EUROPEAN INFLUENCE, AIMED AT TAKING ADVANTAGE OF ALL THE MEANS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND OFFERING ALL MEDIATION POSSIBLE TO PREVENT WAR. TAURAN CITED A COMMON CONVICTION IN HIS CONTACTS WITH EUROPEAN AND ARAB LEADERS THAT "WAR IS NOT THE ANSWER TO THE PROBLEM." IN THIS REGARD, HE CITED WHAT IS A GROWING VATICAN FEAR THAT WAR COULD UNLEASH AN ANTI-CHRISTIAN, ANTI-WESTERN BACKLASH IN THE MUSLIM WORLD.

BUT RECOGNIZING LEGITIMACY OF ACTION AGAINST IRAQ

16. (SBU) DESPITE THE PEACE OFFENSIVE, WHICH THE MEDIA HAS WIDELY HAILED AS A SIGN THAT THE HOLY SEE WILL OPPOSE ANY ACTION AGAINST IRAQ, THE HOLY SEE'S POSITION REMAINS MORE NUANCED THAN OFTEN PORTRAYED IN THE ITALIAN AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA. IN FACT, EVEN AS TAURAN REJECTED THE IDEA OF A

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 VATICA 00059 02 OF 03 081342Z
UNILATERAL PREVENTIVE WAR, HE DID NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF A MILITARY INTERVENTION "IF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, DRAWING ON INTERNATIONAL LAW AND IN PARTICULAR RESOLUTIONS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL, DETERMINED THAT OPPORTUNE AND PROPORTIONATE RECOURSE TO FORCE." THIS IS IN LINE WITH THE

HOLY SEE'S VIEW THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE
MUST TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR POTENTIAL IRAQI FAILINGS TO
RESPECT THE WILL OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

U.S. NUCLEAR WEAPONS DISCUSSION EVOKES REBUKE

17. (SBU) THE RECENT REPORTS FROM WASHINGTON ABOUT THE
POSSIBILITY OF THE U.S. USING NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN RESPONSE TO
A WMD ATTACK AGAINST THE U.S. EVOKED A HARSH REBUKE FROM
TAURAN, WHO SAID "IT WOULD BE BETTER NOT TO EVEN ECHO THIS
HYPOTHESIS, AS IT SEEMS SO MONSTROUS TO ME."

SITUATION IN THE HOLY LANDS CONTINUES TO WEIGH ON POPE

18. (U) THE POPE'S PEACE MESSAGE WAS NOT ONLY FOCUSED ON IRAQ,
BUT ALSO ON WHAT HE TERMED "THE SENSELESS SPIRAL OF BLIND
VIOLENCE" IN THE HOLY LAND. SPEAKING ON THE SITUATION IN THE
MIDDLE EAST IN HIS WORLD DAY OF PEACE MESSAGE JANUARY 1, THE
POPE OBSERVED THAT "THE CUMULATIVE EFFECT OF BITTER MUTUAL
REJECTION AND AN UNENDING CHAIN OF VIOLENCE AND RETALIATION
HAVE SHATTERED EVERY EFFORT THUS FAR TO ENGAGE IN SERIOUS
DIALOGUE ON THE REAL ISSUES INVOLVED." THE POPE SAID IT
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 VATICA 00059 02 OF 03 081342Z
WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO CONCEIVE OF PROGRESS UNTIL THOSE IN
POSITIONS OF POWER BEGIN TO USE THEIR POWER TO IMPLEMENT
POLICIES BASED ON RESPECT FOR HUMAN DIGNITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS.
FM TAURAN REITERATED THAT THE HOLY SEE'S POSITION ON THE
"THE MOTHER OF ALL CONFLICTS" REMAINS: RESPECT FOR THE OTHER
AND HIS LEGITIMATE ASPIRATIONS, WITHDRAWAL FROM THE OCCUPIED
TERRITORIES, PRESENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ON THE
GROUND, AND INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES FOR THE HOLY SITES.

COMMENT

19. (SBU) THE TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS THEME OF 'PEACE ON EARTH'
OFFERS A NATURAL FOCUS FOR THE HOLY SEE TO PROMOTE ITS
PREFERRED VISION OF A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE IRAQ CRISIS.
THE POPE'S PLEAS RECEIVED A WARM RECEPTION AT THE TRADITIONAL
MASSES AND IN ST. PETER'S SQUARE, WHERE THOUSANDS OF CATHOLIC
PEACE MARCHERS HAD TURNED OUT IN THE FIRST DAY OF THE NEW
YEAR SHOW THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE POPE'S MESSAGE. THE

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PAGE 01 VATICA 00059 03 OF 03 081342Z
ACTION EUR-00

INFO LOG-00 NP-00 AMAD-00 CIAE-00 INL-00 USNW-00 DODE-00
DS-00 UTD-00 VC-00 TEDE-00 INR-00 IO-00 LAB-01
VCE-00 NEA-00 DCP-01 NSAE-00 DHS-00 IRM-00 TEST-00
DSCC-00 PRM-00 DRL-02 NFAT-00 SAS-00 SWCI-00 /004W
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P 081319Z JAN 03
FM AMEMBASSY VATICAN
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VATICAN'S VIEWS ON ISSUES OF WAR AND PEACE REMAIN INFLUENTIAL
IN ITALY AND OTHER PREDOMINANTLY CATHOLIC COUNTRIES IN EUROPE
AND BEYOND. UNFORTUNATELY, THE MEDIA TRUMPETS ONLY THE CLEAR
AND COMPELLING APPEALS FOR PEACE, LEAVING ASIDE THE MORE
SUBTLE COMPLEXITIES OF THE VATICAN'S POSITION. ALTHOUGH THE
VATICAN CAN NEVER ADVOCATE FOR WAR, IT CAN BE EXPECTED TO
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 VATICA 00059 03 OF 03 081342Z
ADHERE TO ITS PUBLICLY STATED VIEW ON THE POTENTIAL
LEGITIMACY OF MILITARY ACTION AUTHORIZED BY THE UN. SOME
INFLUENTIAL CATHOLIC THINKERS (PAPAL BIOGRAPHER GEORGE WIEGEL
PROMINENT AMONG THEM) HAVE BEGUN TO REASSESS THE CATECHISM'S
THEORY OF JUST WAR IN LIGHT OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND

THE PROLIFERATION OF WMD. THE HOLY SEE, HOWEVER, HAS NOT YET BEEN CONVINCED THAT THE THREAT FROM IRAQ IS IMMINENT OR CLEAR ENOUGH TO OVERCOME THEIR CURRENT HIGH HURDLES FOR A 'JUST WAR.' ANY MILITARY ACTION UNDERTAKEN WITHOUT UN SANCTION OR IN THE FACE OF AN INSPECTION PROCESS THAT APPEARS NOT TO HAVE RUN ITS COURSE WOULD THEREFORE BE LIKELY TO MEET WITH STRONG VATICAN OPPOSITION.
NICHOLSON

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